Service Tax on Private Bus Operators

16. SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that implementation of the service tax on the private bus passenger operators is very complicated to administer and collect and that the representatives of their unions have strongly protested against the difficulties being created due to this;

(b) whether they have suggested some easy ways for this matter;

(c) if so, what are their suggestions; and

(d) Government's response to their suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No Sir. The Maharashtra Rajya Truck Tempo Bus Vahatuk Mahasangh, Mumbai have demanded withdrawal of service tax on tour operators as majority of person engaged in this service will not be able to register, collect and pay service tax as they are mostly illiterate.

(b) No. Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Pakistani Firing across LOC in Kargil

*17. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan firing and shelling across the Line of Control and border in Jammu & Kashmir was intensified following meetings between Foreign Secretaries and Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in New Delhi and New York, in september this year so much so that Pak forces used air defence arms for shelling the Kargil on September 30, 1997;

(b) if so, whether Government find a pattern and plan behind these unprovoked across border attacks by Pakistan, if so, the details thereof, indicating civilian and other casualties on both sides during the last six months; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) to (c) Unprovoked firing from Pakistani side across the Line of Control (LOC) and the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir had intensified before the Foreign Secretaries met in Delhi in September this year. Pak also resorted to firing on Kargil town and the populated areas around it on 30 September 1997, which coincided with the Prime Minister's visit to New York. Air defence weapons were also used in direct firing role by Pak in Kargil.

Pak endeavours to keep the border alive in order to portray J&K as a 'flash point'. To achieve this aim, it has also resorted to unprovoked firing before any major political event or talks between India and Pak. Firing is also initiated by Pak troops to abet infiltration of militants and arms into J&K.

Details of casualties suffered due to Pakistani firing in Siachen Glacier, LOC and IB in J & K during January to October 1997 are as given in statement (*See below*).

The situation along the border is monitioned regularly and all necessary steps are taken to counter Pakistani misadventure on the border. Whenever there is unprovoked firing from Pakistani troops, our troops give appropriate response taking due care that the incident remains localised and our casualties are minimal.

There are established mechanisms such as formation level flag meetings and scheduled weekly telephonic conversation between DG&MO of the two countries.

Statement

Details of casualties due to Pak firing in Siachen Glacier/LOC/IB in J&K: January to October 1997

Sector	*Army*		*BSF*		*Civil*	
	K	*W*	*K*	*W*	*K*	*W*
Siachen Glacier	*02*	*25*	—	—	—	—
LOC	*12*	*59*	—	*4*	*27*	*44*
IB	*2*	*11*	*2*	*8*	*8*	*20*
Total	**16**	**95**	**2**	**12**	**35**	**64**

K :Killed
W :Wounded

Involvement of Cops-customs Officials in Smuggling

*18. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Indian Express dated 8th September, 1997 under the heading "Cops, Customs involved in smuggling"; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what action Government have taken to unearth the racket at the airport?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the report furnished by Delhi Police, a vigilance inquiry was conducted into the allegation made by the complainant police official (referred to in the news-item) that the police officers posted at the airport indulged in smuggling activity but the complainant did not join the inquiry despite six summons having been issued to him. It has further been reported that the said police official was in the habit of levelling false allegations against his superior officers and that he has since been dismissed from service on the grounds of misbehaviour and insubordination.

Service Tax on Private Bus Operators

*19. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 'Tour Operators' within the meaning of the Motor Vehicles Act and the private bus operators presently plying buses on thousands of routes are the same or they are juridically different;

(b) if so, the position of the levy of the service tax vis-a-vis the tour operators and the private bus operators;

(c) whether this matter was discussed with the representatives of the bus operators recently and some clarification was issued; and

(d) what steps are being taken to rationalise these juridical difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) The meaning of the 'Tour Operator' and the private bus operators are juridically different within the ambit of the Motor vehicles Act, 1988.

(b) Service tax is not payable by all vehicles which carry passengers but, is only in respect of services rendered by tour operators who holds a tourist permit under the rules made under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

(c) The Maharashtra Rajya Truck Tempo Bus Vahatuk Mahasangh (MRTTBVM), Mumbai have demanded withdrawl of service tax on Tour Operators. It has been represented by them that this service tax is applicable to all kinds of vehicles carrying any kind of passenger and that majority of the persons engaged in this service will not be able to register, collect and pay service tax as they are mostly illiterate. They have not made any suggestion.